United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1552
3 January 1994

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Yasushi Akashi arrives in Zagreb to take up position as Special Representative of Secretary-General for former Yugoslavia and head of UNPROFOR, replacing Thorvald Stoltenberg, who continues as United Nations representative and Co-Chairman of International Conference on Former Yugoslavia.

+ WFP will supply additional 17,000 metric tons of emergency food to vulnerable people throughout Somalia as first part of 53,000 tonnes of high value commodities needed for 1994; while only 15 percent of WFP projects there now emergency-related, Somalia is still recovering from severe famine.

+ UNICEF appeals for $2 million to help feed and educate some 30,000 abandoned children in Malange, Angola; 50 per cent of them reported to be malnourished, many of them orphaned by long war between Government and UNITA.

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Yasushi Akashi arrived in Zagreb today to assume his position as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the former Yugoslavia. As such, he is taking over as head of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) from Thorvald Stoltenberg, the United Nations representative and Co-Chairman, with Lord Owen, of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. Mr. Stoltenberg will now focus on his role as Co-Chairman. Mr. Akashi's previous position was as head of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), the largest field operation ever launched by the Organization.

Addressing the press at Zagreb airport, he said he had been told that the parties to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina were very close to accepting a peace package. "With the exception of the question of access to the sea, they are indeed very close. But always it is the last step which is difficult, which requires an act of courage on the part of the leadership," he

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said. "But if the international community sees positive, serious efforts on the part of the parties in ex-Yugoslavia, I think they will agree to keep their troops here."

A United Nations spokesman said today that the next formal round of talks on Bosnia and Herzegovina are scheduled to take place on 18 January in Geneva. Meanwhile, the Bosnian Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Croatia will be meeting in Vienna tomorrow to discuss matters related to the draft peace agreement presented at the previous round of negotiations.

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The World Food Programme (WFP) has announced that it will supply an additional 16,900 metric tons of emergency food to vulnerable people throughout Somalia as the first part of the 53,289 tonnes of high value commodities that will be needed this year. Of all WFP projects in Somalia, only 15 percent are now emergency related but, as WFP Executive Director Catherine Bertini pointed out, although significant progress had been made over the last year in alleviating hunger, Somalia was still recovering from the widespread famine. "The WFP's priority for 1994 is to initiate activities which strengthen food security, from the national level right down to households," she said.

The WFP requires $50 million worth of various food commodities to carry out its 300 food programmes in Somalia in 1994. Improved security and increased agricultural input, combined with good rains, resulted in a 1993 crop season of "average" to "satisfactory" harvests. However, there are various pockets of continuing hunger in the countryside and in some urban areas. Village and family buffer stocks have not yet regained their pre-war levels.

Ms. Bertini said, "The people of Somalia urgently need employment to get back on their feet. For this reason, 50 per cent of WFP's programmes in 1994 are food-for-work schemes which we expect will generate around 64,000 jobs, indirectly benefiting 320,000 people."

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The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) today appealed for $2 million to provide urgently needed humanitarian assistance to some 30,000 abandoned children in Malange, Angola. The children are the latest victims of ongoing civil strife in that country. Malange, one of the hardest hit cities, was until recently sealed off because of months of bitter fighting between forces of the Government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

Commenting on the situation, the representative of UNICEF for Angola, Joseph Christmas, said that his assessment mission to Malange on 14 December was one of his most painful experiences in Angola. "Unless these children are provided with sustained emergency assistance and the problem of their future

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According to a United Nations spokesman, Mr. Dumbutshena arrived in Mogadishu yesterday and has already started to carry out his assignment. Pending the re-establishment of the country's judicial system, UNOSOM has held people believed to have been involved in attacks against its personnel or in other criminal actions, while it awaited the appointment of the Independent Jurist.

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